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ABSTRACT

A study was done of the degree to which a program of comprehensive training in shared decision-making was implemented in Chicago (Illinois) Public Schools. Focus was on reliably measuring the implementation of shared decision-making processes and principles and identifying factors that might promote the adoption of this model at the local level. Study data were obtained through observations of local school planning meetings and interviews with some key school personnel. Observation data were gathered by four evaluators with backgrounds in the implementation of shared decision-making who used an observational instrument relating to role adoption, collaborative planning, consensus building, broad-based ownership, and the integrity with which processes were implemented. The data cover a random sample of 10 schools from the 42 schools involved in the project. Results indicate that shared decision-making and school-based management were successfully implemented in most of the schools participating in the study. Increasing improvement in implementation was noted from Year 1 to Year 2 of the project. The data suggest that training in shared decision-making was effective, and that among the schools participating, two were "model" schools. Included are five tables and an appendix summarizing the implementation of shared decision-making by schools. (JB)

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IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN URBAN SETTINGS

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IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN URBAN SETTINGS

Introduction

In recent years, school-based management or shared decision-making has been proposed as a needed educational reform and as a useful framework for improving the educational quality of schools (Guthrie, 1986). With respect to implementing shared decision-making as a model for school reform, schools are stressing the need for teachers to assume greater decision-making authority and to adopt new and expanded roles within the organizational structure of the school. In addition, mechanisms are required for generating a sense of broad-based ownership of school improvement initiatives and thus involving all of the school's constituencies in the shared decision-making process. The implementation of such a model is based on collaborative planning and consensus building strategies as the school develops and implements school improvement plans directed toward the accomplishment of its vision and mission.

The shared decision-making model evolved from research on effective schools (Edmonds, 1984) as well as ideas about organizational structure and communication from the private sector which rely on particular structure and process variables, such as group maintenance and collaborative planning techniques. In general, this approach promotes parent and community involvement within a cooperative planning model based on consensus building techniques and broad-based ownership involving all the constituencies of the school. Research has indicated that the greater the control a local school has over those aspects of its organization that affects its performance, the more likely the school is to display those characteristics that promote educational quality and instructional effectiveness (Henderson, 1987). There

is mounting evidence that shared decision-making leads to increased commitment to the school, enhanced cooperation and reduced conflict (Corcoran, 1988). It would be expected then that the introduction of shared decision-making would, in general, result in changes in the climate and environment of the school. To the extent Edmonds (1984) was right when he suggested that the school environment has the capacity to elevate or depress individual teachers' capacity for effective or ineffective teaching, it could also be hypothesized that the introduction of shared decision-making would, in the long run, lead to improvements in terms of indicators of student success.

During the 1988-89 school year, Chicago Public Schools initiated a comprehensive training program to introduce a select group of 42 schools to the shared decision-making process. Intensive training sessions for administrators, teachers, career service staff, parents, students, and community members have provided the schools with the principles of shared decision-making and effective leadership techniques over the past two years with the anticipation that these schools would implement shared decision-making at the local school level. Longer term project expectations included hypothesized changes in school climate following from the implementation of shared decision-making that would, in turn, promote improvement in indicators of student success.

The focus of this study is on the degree to which the processes actually implemented at the local school level mirror the processes prescribed by the model of shared decision-making and described by the comprehensive training program. In a general sense, the intent is to provide insight into the complex relationships involved in the implementation of shared decision-making

in urban settings. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to report on attempts to measure reliably the implementation of shared decision-making processes and principles in urban settings over a two-year period and to identify those factors which may promote the adoption of shared decision-making at the local level. In addition, the study attempts to identify "model" schools which have adopted school-based management and shared decision-making so that their characteristics and successes might be shared with other schools participating in the project as well as other schools within the Chicago Public Schools system.

From an evaluation perspective, this study addresses two important issues. First, the results of this study can be utilized as a feedback mechanism for gauging the efficacy of training as well as apprising project administrators of the probability of successfully implementing shared decision-making at the local level (see Evans and Sheffler, 1976). In this sense, the degree of implementation of shared decision-making is seen as the dependent variable to be used in assessing the effectiveness of training (the independent variable). Also, to the extent "model" shared decision-making schools are identified, the results of the study can be utilized to enhance future training activities by focusing on the characteristics of these "model" schools and by having these schools, and their faculty and staff, play a role in continuing training efforts.

Second, the results of this study provide a foundation upon which future research and evaluation activities can be built. In this sense, the degree of implementation data would assume the status of an independent variable against which other outcome measures might be assessed. Other outcome measures, or

dependent variables, might include, for example, school climate factors and indicators of student success. That is, evaluators would want to insure that shared decision-making had been implemented at the local school level before more summative types of studies were conducted. This was essentially the point of Charters and Jones (1973) in their classic article dealing with the risk of appraising non-events in educational research studies.

Methodology

The data related to the implementation of shared decision-making processes were obtained through observation of local school planning meetings (involving the planning team designated by each school and referred to as the Core Planning Team in the parlance of the project). In some instances, interviews were conducted with key school personnel to enhance the quality of the overall data base.

The primary data, based on observations, were gathered by four evaluators with extensive backgrounds in the implementation of shared decision-making/school-based management. The observational instrument employed for assessing implementation utilized 38 items related to the essential components of shared decision-making. The items addressed, in general, role adoption, collaborative planning, consensus building, broad-based ownership and the integrity with which processes were implemented. For the most part, there was a one-to-one correspondence between the items utilized and the components of training as defined by project documentation and the training materials. The observational instrument was field-tested by the evaluators and the results of this process lend credence to the notion that the instrument is a reliable and

valid measure of shared decision-making processes; inter-rater reliability estimates, for example, ranged from .72 to .95 and were deemed sufficient for the current research purposes.

Results

Table 1 presents data relative to the implementation of role performance by school. Of the 42 schools involved in the project, data are provided for the 10 schools with which the authors work most closely. These 10 are a "random" sample of the 42 total schools and the data reported on in this paper suggest they seem representative of the total set of schools. In terms of role adoption, the data in Table 1 indicate that two schools, Cordero and Day, have implemented the roles of principal, chairperson, process observer and the code of conduct for group members in an appropriate manner; that is, as defined by the training program and supporting documentation. Most of the other schools have implemented many of the roles in an appropriate manner; only Pincay School has failed to adopt any role appropriately. In viewing the results across schools, only the role of process observer seems not to have been fully implemented; in one-half of the schools, no evidence of the functioning of that role was observed.

Table 2 presents the data relating to the implementation of shared decision-making processes by school. Only Day School has implemented all the processes (including group maintenance techniques, attendance patterns, collaborative planning and consensus building) in the manner prescribed by the training program. Most of the schools have implemented many of the processes and when the results are viewed across schools only group maintenance

techniques seem to be an area where many schools are failing to implement appropriate strategies. These data support the data in Table 1 in the sense that one of the roles of the process observer is to assume responsibility for group maintenance functions.

Table 3 presents the data related to broad-based ownership of school planning initiatives. Only Cordero and Day had representation from all constituencies, including teachers, students, parents, staff, community members and council members. Both Krone and Velasquez had only teachers in attendance, which suggests a lack of broad-based ownership at these two sites. In viewing the results across schools, it seems that several schools need to intensify their efforts to get more community members and students involved in school planning activities.

Table 4 presents a list of the schools in rank order by implementation level; the total score reported for each school is a ratio based on a summation of the total number of items on observational instrument implemented appropriately to the total number of items and includes the implementation of appropriate role adoption, shared decision-making processes, and broad-based ownership. These data suggest that Day School and Cordero School might be considered "model" schools in terms of implementing shared decision-making as described by the training program. There is some variation across schools, with half above the average of 75 and half below. The majority of the schools seem to be implementing many aspects of shared decision-making; only Pincay School seems problematic with respect to the adoption of this model.

For the interested reader, Table 5 provides a description of the types of

"content" the various teams were addressing during their planning meetings and the focus of their school improvement planning initiatives. For example, of the 10 schools, all were concerned with increasing parent involvement and most addressed professional development. In general, there seems to be a pattern that suggests concern with expanding the sphere of influence of the planning group by having parents, staff and students involved in the planning process.

Finally, Appendix A provides a summary of the implementation of shared decision-making on a school-by-school basis. These more qualitative descriptions provide some insight to the processes being implemented at each school and provide hints as to factors underlying the adoption of some roles and processes. For example, it was noted above that Pincay School has not fully implemented the shared decision-making model. The description provided in Appendix A indicates that turnover of the key members of the planning team and approach of the principal may have a deleterious effect on the implementation of shared decision-making from Year 1 to Year 2 of their participation in the project.

Discussion

In thinking about the individual schools, it seems clear that there are two "model" schools with respect to implementing shared decision-making as defined by training program and supporting documentation; namely, Day School and Cordero School. It also seems evident that most of the schools are implementing most aspects of the shared decision-making model described by the training program. While the actual aspects of the shared decision-making model implemented at each school vary somewhat, most schools are making

progress towards the model of shared decision-making (as described in Appendix A). The only exception is Pincay School, which has implemented only about half the roles and processes prescribed by the model and has digressed somewhat from Year 1 to Year 2 of the project.

With respect to the "model" schools, they display appropriate role adoption, collaborative planning, and broad-based ownership; these two schools, and their faculty and staff, might be utilized as part of the training process for other schools participating in the project. The remaining schools might benefit from some additional training or consulting in the specific areas where implementation weaknesses were noted in the data. By way of an example, Krone and Santos might work on improving group maintenance techniques while Bailey might address attendance patterns. As each school seems to have a fairly unique implementation pattern, their individual training needs vary accordingly. Only Pincay School might find training in the basics of shared decision-making useful. In reviewing the components of training relative to the implementation data, it seems apparent that, in general, the training was effective in terms of imparting the processes and principles of shared decision-making.

In thinking about the data across schools, the roles of the principal and chairperson seem firmly established. In two or three instances, it appears that some attention should be given the group behavior with respect to following the established code of conduct. In many of the schools, the process observer needs to play a more active role; it may be that additional training for process observers would be useful. Another hypothesis about the role of the process observer might relate to the type of person functioning in

this role; certainly further research with respect to the utilization of this role would be helpful.

Most of the schools are utilizing collaborative planning and consensus building strategies and most display appropriate attendance patterns. However, several of the schools need to improve in terms of their utilization of group maintenance techniques. It may be that because some of these school planning teams have been together for a period of time now they no longer feel the need to continue group maintenance activities. In examining the broad-based ownership data, many schools need to involve more community members and students in the planning process.

The results of this study suggest that most of the shared decision-making processes implemented at the local school level mirror the processes prescribed by the model of shared decision-making and described by the comprehensive training program. In this sense, these data suggest that the training, in general, was effective. In addition, two "model" schools were identified; there are implications in terms of future training designs or approaches within the project in which these "model" schools, and their faculty and staff, might play an important role.

The results of this study can also serve as a foundation for future research and evaluation activities related to the project. In future studies, the implementation data can play a vital role in the interpretation of the longer term project outcomes. By way of an example, the degree of implementation of shared decision-making might be an important factor to consider in assessing changes in school climate that are hypothesized as a result of the implementation of shared decision-making. Also, outcome

studies involving indicators of student success should consider these implementation data; it seems clear that at least two schools could serve as "models" in assessing change, whether in terms of school climate factors or indicators of student success. In general, these implementation data should be useful as a guide to gauging the impact of school improvement plans and initiatives in project schools.

Conclusions

The results of this paper indicate that shared decision-making/school-based management has been successfully implemented in most of the schools participating in this study. Most of the schools have implemented the processes and principles described by the training component of the project, and improvement in the degree of implementation has been noted from Year 1 to Year 2 of the project. These data suggest that training in shared decision-making has been effective. The results of the study also suggest that there are at least two "model" shared decision-making schools currently participating in the project; there are implications for future training designs or approaches in which these two schools could play important roles. Finally, it seems apparent that future research and evaluation activities need to be address the role the degree of implementation data can play in the interpretation of outcome data related to the longer term goals of the project. In this sense, evaluators would want to establish the fact that shared decision-making had been implemented at local school sites before more summative types of studies were conducted.

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TABLE 1

IMPLEMENTATION OF ROLE PERFORMANCE BY SCHOOL

	ROLE				
SCHOOL	PRINCIPAL	CHAIR	OBSERVER	GROUP	TOTAL
BAILEY	100	100	0	57	64
CORDERO	100	100	100	100	100
DAY	100	100	100	100	100
KRONE	100	100	0	84	71
McCARRON	100	100	50	71	80
PERRET	50	100	50	57	64
PINCAY	75	66	0	57	50
SANTOS	100	100	50	71	80
STEVENS	100	100	0	100	75
VELASQUEZ	100	100	0	100	75
AVERAGE	93	97	35	80	76

KEY: GROUP = specified code of conduct for group members

TABLE 2

IMPLEMENTATION OF SHARED DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES BY SCHOOL

	PROCESSES				
SCHOOL	GM	AP	CP	CN	TOTAL
BAILEY	50	0	100	100	66
CORDERO	50	100	50	100	77
DAY	100	100	100	100	100
KRONE	0	100	50	100	66
McCARRON	50	100	100	100	88
PERRET	50	100	50	66	66
PINCAY	50	50	100	66	66
SANTOS	0	50	100	100	66
STEVENS	50	100	100	100	88
VELASQUEZ	50	100	100	100	88
AVERAGE	45	80	85	93	77

KEY: GM = Group Maintenance Techniques
AP = Attendance Patterns
CP = Collaborative Planning
CN = Consensus Building

TABLE 3

IMPLEMENTATION OF BROAD-BASED OWNERSHIP BY SCHOOL

	CONSTITUENCIES						
SCHOOL	LSC	CM	P	CS	T	S	TOTAL
BAILEY	0	1	5	1	34	0	41
CORDERO	1	2	2	1	33	2	41
DAY	4	1	2	1	9	1	18
KRONE	0	0	0	0	9	0	9
McCARRON	4	2	2	2	28	0	38
PERRET	5	0	2	3	24	2	36
PINCAY	4	0	2	1	14	0	21
SANTOS	1	0	1	1	9	0	12
STEVENS	1	0	3	2	12	0	18
VELASQUEZ	0	0	0	0	12	0	12

KEY: LSC = Local School Council
CM = Community Member
P = Parent
CS = Career Service Staff
T = Teacher
S = Student

NOTE: These data represent attendance at the meeting on which the implementation observations were based.

TABLE 4

LIST OF SCHOOLS IN RANK ORDER BY IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

RANK - SCHOOL	SCORE
1 - DAY	100
2 - CORDERO	93
3 - VELASQUEZ	81
4 - McCARRON	80
5 - STEVENS	76
6 - SANTOS	73
7 - KRONE	71
8 - BAILEY	65
9 - PERRET	62
10 - PINCAY	55

AVERAGE = 75

TABLE 5

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTING
Increase Parent Involvement	10
Provide Professional Development	8
Improve Self-image/concept/esteem	7
Increase Student Influence	5
Involve Staff in Planning	4
Raise Educational Expectations	3
Promote Safe Educational Environment	3
Improve Staff Morale/Job Satisfaction	2
Improve School Effort	2
Promote Positive Peer Associations	2

N = 10 schools

NOTE: Only goals mentioned by two or more schools have been listed.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SHARED DECISION-MAKING BY SCHOOL

Bailey School. Bailey was ranked 27th (of 42 schools) on the 1989-90 observational data obtained from Core Planning Team (CPT) visitations. The overall score of 65 represents no change from the score of 65 recorded the previous year. In general, no improvement has been observed relative to shared decision-making, role adoption and broad-based ownership from Year 1 to Year 2 of the project. Bailey still needs to improve in terms of increased involvement from all groups, the use of a process observer for group maintenance functions, more active participation from all group members, and better attendance patterns.

Cordero School. Cordero was ranked 2nd overall (of 42 schools) on the observational data obtained from CPT visitations. The score of 93 represents a gain of 8% from the score of 85 recorded from the previous year. There is evidence of broad-based ownership as all constituencies were represented at the CPT meeting including LSC members, community representatives, parents, teachers, staff and students. The principal models the type of participatory leadership essential in school-based management and the other roles (chairperson, etc.) are executed in accordance with the training model. There is a great deal of cooperation and collaboration. At this point in time, Cordero School should be considered a model of shared decision-making, collaborative planning, and broad-based ownership.

Day School. Day was ranked 1st overall (of 42 schools) on the observational data obtained from CPT visitations. The score of 100 represents a 9% increase from the data obtained from the previous year. Based on these data, Day School should be considered a model of school-based management. The school displays appropriate role adoption, collaborative planning, consensus building, and broad-based ownership.

Krone School. On the 1989-90 observational data gathered from visits to CPT meetings, Krone School ranked 20th overall (of 42 schools). The score of 71 represented a gain of 10% from the previous year. Certainly, progress in terms of implementing the shared decision-making processes is being made. The areas in which improvement could be made include increasing the base of ownership so as to involve all constituencies, better utilizing the role of process observer to facilitate group maintenance functions, increasing active group participation on the part of all members, and better utilization of consensus building techniques.

McCarron School. McCarron ranked 11th overall (of 42 schools) on the basis of the observational data collected by visiting CPT meetings. The total score of 80 represented a 29% increase from the previous year; this was the 4th highest gain noted across the

42 schools. There is evidence of broad-based ownership; only students were not represented at the CPT meeting. The principal and chairperson play appropriate roles. The process observer could attempt to get all the participants actively involved. Also, they could improve on their consensus build strategies. Overall, marked improvement; at this point in time McCarron School in one of the better school-based management schools in the project.

Perret School. Perret School ranked 31st overall (of 42 schools) on the CPT observational data. The score of 62 represented a 17% gain from the previous year; this was the 9th highest gain reported across all 42 schools. Certainly, improvement has be noted from Year 1 to Year 2 of the project. Perret stills to improve in terms of the roles played by the principal and process observer, the use of consensus building techniques, active group participation, and collaborative planning.

Pincay School. Pincay School, ranked 34th overall (of 42 schools) based on the CPT observational data gathered during the 1989-90 school year. In terms of the overall score of 55, this represented a 7% decline from the previous year. In general, no improvement has been noted in the implementation of a shared decision-making model; in fact, they have digressed somewhat. There was no student or community participation. They also have problems with the execution of the various roles, including the principal (who seems fairly dominant). They lack active group participation and there was no process observer to keep meetings on-track. There also seem to be problems with attendance patterns and the utilization of consensus building techniques. It appears as though there has been almost a complete turnover in terms of the key roles on the CPT.

Santos School. Santos School was ranked 19th (of 42 schools) on the data gathered during the observation of CPT meetings. The overall score of 73 represented a 5% decline from the previous school year. In terms of broad-based ownership, no students or community members attended the meeting. The process observer did not participate and this had a deleterious effect on overall group participation. The team members were not prompt in their attendance. Also, no consensus building techniques were utilized in reaching group decisions. In general, there is little evidence to suggest that Santos School has made much progress over the past year in terms of improving on the implementation of a shared decision-making model.

Stevens School. Stevens ranked 15th (of 42 schools) overall based on the data gathered from CPT meeting observations. The score of 76 represented a 13% increase from the previous year. In terms of suggestions for improvement, techniques for consensus building should be utilized, the role of process observer needs to be more fully developed, and they need to expand their broad-based ownership to include students and community members.

Velasquez School. Velasquez ranked 8th overall (of 42 schools) on the observational data gathered from the visitations of CPT meetings. The overall score of 81 represented a 21% increase from the previous year. Considerable progress has been made in terms of implementing a shared decision-making model. The only areas in which improvement might be desirable is the need to expand broad-based ownership to include all constituencies, better utilization of the process observer, and the use of consensus building techniques.